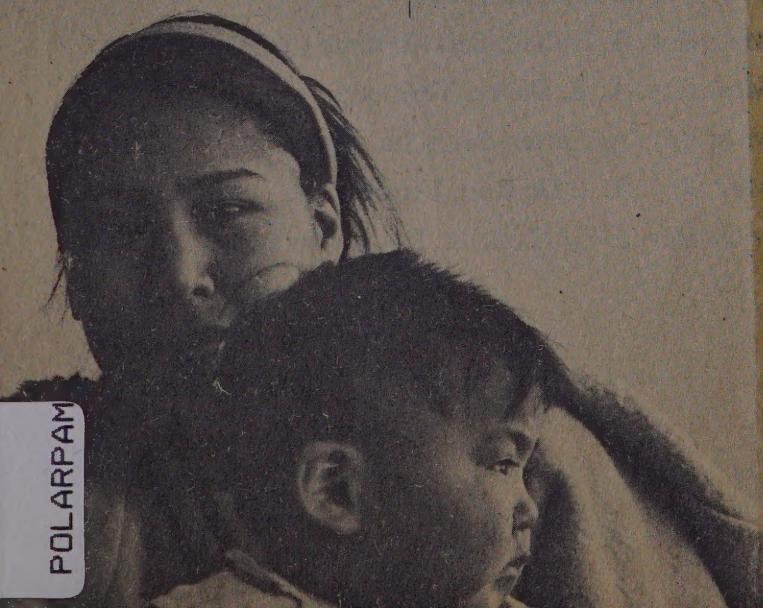




**NORTHERN
DEVELOPMENT:
AT
WHAT
COST?**



Northern Development: At What Cost?

Labour Day Message

of the

Canadian Catholic Conference

September 1, 1975

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Introduction

1. A cry for justice
rings out today
from the Native Peoples
who inhabit the Canadian North.
Dramatically,
on a massive scale
the Native Peoples of the North
find themselves
and their way of life
being threatened
by the headlong search
for new energy sources
on this continent.

2. At the same time,
other voices are raising serious
ethical questions about
the enormous demands for energy
required to maintain
high standards of wealth and comfort
in industrial society.
A variety of public interest groups
are calling for
greater care of the environment
and responsible stewardship
of the energy resources
in this country.

3. We, Catholic bishops of Canada,
want to echo these cries for justice
and demands for stewardship
in the Canadian North.
They tell us much

- about ourselves as citizens and consumers,
- about the industrial society of North America,
- about the Native Peoples of the North.

As Christians,
we cannot ignore the pressing
ethical issues of northern development.
For the living God,
the God we worship,
is the Lord of Creation
and Justice.

4. We wish to share with you,
fellow citizens,
some reflections and judgments
on the ethical problems
posed by the industrial development

of the Canadian North.⁽¹⁾

We hope that these reflections and judgments will contribute to more public debate and stimulate alternative policies regarding the future development of the North.

We also ask that these expressed concerns be tested in the public arena along with other points of view.

The Northern dilemma

5. Since "time beyond memory", the vast land mass that covers the northern tips of our provinces and the sub-Arctic regions has been the home for many of this country's Native Peoples:

Indians,
Inuit,
Métis.

Through time, these Native Peoples developed social, cultural, economic, and religious patterns of life which were in harmony with the rhythms of the land itself.⁽²⁾

6. This land has been the source of livelihood for a significant portion of Northern Native Peoples, along with a number of early white settlers.

It has been the basis of their traditional economy

- hunting,
- fishing,
- trapping.

For the Native Peoples the land is more than simply a source of food or cash.

The land itself constitutes a permanent sense of security, well-being and identity.

For generations, this land has defined the basis of what the natives are as a people.

In their own words, "Our land is our life".⁽³⁾

7. After countless generations of occupation, use and care

the Native Peoples of the North have come to claim their rights to these lands.⁽⁴⁾

While some northern natives are giving up their life of hunting, fishing, and trapping, these lands remain essential to their future economic development.

For these northern lands contain a natural storehouse of some of the most valuable resources on this continent

- potential reserves of oil and natural gas,
- powerful river systems and
- rich mineral deposits.

8. But now the "energy crisis" in the industrial world is posing a serious challenge to the people and resources of the northern lands.

The search for new supplies of

- oil,
- gas,
- electricity

on this continent

is largely focussed on the untapped energy resources of the Canadian North.

9. In recent years, provincial governments, crown corporations and private companies have been planning large scale projects to harness the power potential of the northern rivers.

- Dams,
- power plants,
- railroads,
- highways

are now under construction in several provinces:

- *the James Bay hydro project in northern Quebec;*
- *the Churchill-Nelson hydro development in northern Manitoba;*
- *the Churchill Falls hydro project in Labrador;*

- *the hydro electric plants
in northwest British Columbia.*

10. Simultaneously,
the Canadian North has been sighted
as a major region
for potential reserves
of oil and gas.

Assisted by the federal government,
the giants of the oil industry

- Exxon,
- Shell,
- Gulf,
- Mobil,
- Sunoco,
- and others

have led the way,
through their Canadian subsidiaries,
in making discoveries
and initiating plans to build
several major industrial projects: ⁽⁵⁾

- *the Mackenzie Valley pipeline
in the Northwest Territories
to bring natural gas
from Alaska and the Canadian Arctic
to Southern Canada and the United States;*
- *the Polar Gas pipeline
designed to bring
natural gas from the
high Arctic to the Maritimes
and the United States;*
- *the Syncrude project
to develop
the Athabasca tarsands
in northern Alberta.*

11. In this way
the Canadian North is fast becoming
a centre stage
in a continental struggle to gain control
of new energy sources.

The critical issue
is how these northern energy resources
are to be developed

— by whom and for whom.

We are especially concerned
that the future of the North
not be determined by
colonial patterns of development,
wherein a powerful few
end up controlling
both the people and the resources.

12. Some present examples
of industrial planning
give us cause for grave concern.⁽⁶⁾
For what we see emerging
in the Canadian North
are forms of exploitation
which we often assume happen
only in Third World countries:
a serious abuse of both
the Native Peoples
and
the energy resources
of the North.⁽⁷⁾

Herein lies the Northern dilemma.
What has been described as
the "last frontier"
in the building of this nation
may become our own "Third World".

Demands for justice

13. Our first pastoral concern
is that justice be done
in the future industrial development
of the Canadian North.
In various parts of the northern lands
the Native Peoples' protests
have drawn attention to
a series of injustices:

(i) In several cases,
governments and corporations
have secretly planned
and suddenly announced
the construction of large
industrial projects
without prior consultation
with the people who will be
most directly affected.⁽⁸⁾
As a result,
the future lives of these Native Peoples
and their communities
tend to be planned **for** them
by Southern interests.

(ii) The plans for these industrial projects
are usually finalized and implemented
before land claim settlements
have been reached
with the Native People of the region.⁽⁹⁾
Yet, for people whose land is their life,

and who wish to secure control over their future economic development, a just settlement of their land claims lies at the very heart of their struggle for justice.

(iii) The construction of these industrial projects has sometimes proceeded without an adequate assessment of their environmental and social consequences. In several instances, the building of power plants and hydro dams will cause the flooding of vast areas of land, damage to the vegetation and wildlife, and the relocation of whole communities of people whose lives have traditionally depended on hunting, fishing, and trapping.⁽¹⁰⁾

(iv) The promise of jobs in the construction of these industrial projects has offered no real alternative way of life. For most of the Native Peoples, these jobs are temporary, paying relatively low wages for low skilled labour.⁽¹¹⁾

14. As a result, more and more Native Peoples are being compelled to give up their land-based economy and move into the urban centres where alcoholism and welfarism have become prevalent for many. While compensation may be offered, money can hardly replace the loss of land and what it means to the lives of the Native Peoples and their future economic development.

15. A sense of justice, coming from the living God, tells us there are better ways of developing the resources of the Canadian North. The Lord of Creation has given mankind the responsibility to develop the resources

of Nature
so as to make possible
a fuller human life
for all peoples.⁽¹²⁾
This coincides with the beliefs
of the Native Peoples
who have traditionally
called for
a "communal sharing" of the land
which belongs to the Creator.

16. To develop the resources
of the Canadian North
is a responsibility
to be shared by all
who live in this country

— North and South.

While Native Peoples
in the North
must be prepared to share in
this responsibility,
they rightly demand
that their claims to justice
be realized.

In the words
of one Northern Native leader:
"... *We also want to participate*
in Canadian society,
but we want
to participate as equals.

It is impossible to be equal
if our economic development
is subordinated to the
profit-oriented priorities
of the American multi-nationals.
... *the Native People are saying*
we must have a large
degree of control over
our own economic development.

Without control
we will end up
like our brothers and sisters
on the reserves in the South:
continually powerless
threatened
and impoverished."⁽¹³⁾

17. Across the Canadian North
Native Peoples' groups have begun
to articulate a common program
for justice.⁽¹⁴⁾

Their goal is greater control
over their own economic development.
The key is a just settlement
of their land claims.
In recent years,
native groups have been taking
the land issue into the courtrooms
to establish their traditional rights
to these lands.

18. The living God
calls on us
to respond to these demands
for justice.
Christian love of neighbour
and justice
cannot be separated in the
development of people.
"For love implies
an absolute demand for justice,
namely a recognition of the dignity
and rights of one's neighbour."⁽¹⁵⁾

Demands for stewardship

19. A second pastoral concern
is the demand for
responsible stewardship
of energy resources
in the development of
the Canadian North.
Throughout this country,
public interest groups
are raising serious questions about
our highly industrialized society
and the current exploitation
of northern energy resources.

(i) The scramble for northern energy
continues without
adequate measures to regulate
the patterns of relentless
consumption in this country.
In the last 25 years alone,
Canada's consumption
of oil, gas, and electricity
has multiplied three times over.⁽¹⁶⁾
This extravagant consumption
of energy
generates increasing demands for
the rapid development
of northern resources.

(ii) Northern development
is also continuing without
full public discussion of future energy needs.
Governments and industries
predict that Canada's energy needs will
have to multiply four more times
by the end of this century
to maintain "a high quality of life".⁽¹⁷⁾
But what is this "quality of life"
and who determines
what these future energy needs
should be?

(iii) The reasons for rapidly developing
northern energy resources
on such a massive scale
at this time
have also been seriously questioned.⁽¹⁸⁾
While the sale of these resources
will reap large profits
for the energy industry now,
it may also cause the rapid depletion
of non-renewable supplies
of oil and gas
required for the future.

(iv) In several cases, this energy
is being rapidly developed now
to feed the industrial centres
of the United States.⁽¹⁹⁾
Yet, there are many other countries,
especially poor nations of the Third World,
that are suffering
from acute shortages of energy
required for basic survival.

20. The United States and Canada
are ranked as the highest users
of energy in the world today.
For these two countries,
containing little more than 6.5%
of the world's population,
consume about 43%
of the energy supplies
of this planet.⁽²⁰⁾
All this energy
goes to run the countless number
of machines which have become
"our energy slaves"
in industries, businesses and homes.
It is now estimated,

that given the amount of muscular power required to do the work of these machines, each North American has the equivalent of 400 "energy slaves" working for him.⁽²¹⁾

21. We North Americans -
have created a highly industrialized society
that places exorbitant demands
on limited supplies of energy.

The maximization of consumption, profit, power

has become the operating principle of this society.

These are the driving forces behind the present continental struggle to gain control of northern energy resources. (22)

These are the idols
which turn many
from service of man and world
and, thus, from the living God.

22. As a culture, we have not faced up to the fact that the world God created has its limits.

Many voices now warn that mankind has reached a "turning point" in history: crucial decisions must be made now to stop plundering the Earth's non-renewable resources before it is too late. (23)

Yet, this industrialized society treats the resources of the Earth as if they were limitless.

23. In recent years, public interest groups have been calling for responsible stewardship of northern energy resources. They are calling for more effective measures to reduce levels of consumption and waste and preserve non-renewable resources.

These groups contend that future resource development, which is largely controlled today by multi-national corporations, must be made more accountable to the Canadian public.

24. The living God calls us to a life of caring, sparing, sharing the limited resources of this planet.⁽²⁴⁾ This is no longer simply a moral imperative. It has also become a practical necessity for the survival of our common humanity.⁽²⁵⁾

Northern alternatives

25. We readily acknowledge that the Catholic Church must also take a critical look at itself. We now see that, coming from another culture, the Church may have contributed to disruptive changes in Native culture while helping to bring Christianity to the North through the creative efforts of missionaries who have shared the hard lives of the people. At the same time, the Church has participated with others in the wealth and comfort of an industrial society which places enormous demands on energy resources at the expense of other people.

26. We look to the past in order that we may learn to act more responsibly in the present. The present industrial development of the Canadian North poses new challenges for the Church. Some of our northern dioceses have been re-evaluating

their missionary work
in the light of these challenges.⁽²⁶⁾
But the responsibility
lies with all of us
who comprise the Church in Canada.

27. We believe that
the Spirit is challenging
the whole Church to fulfill
its prophetic service in society today.
As the Third Synod of Bishops
asserted in 1971:

*"Action on behalf of justice
and participation in the
transformation of the world
fully appear to us
as a constitutive dimension
of the preaching of the Gospel,
or, in other words,
of the Church's mission
for the redemption of the human
race
and its liberation from every
oppressive situation."* ⁽²⁷⁾

28. We contend, therefore,
that there are better ways
of developing the Canadian North.
What is required today
is a public search for alternative policies
for northern development.
This search is already under way
through the activities
of Native Peoples and public interest
groups across the country.⁽²⁸⁾

29. We find ourselves
in solidarity with many
of these initiatives.
Based on the ethical principles
of social justice
and responsible stewardship,
we believe
that the following conditions
must be met before
any final decisions are made to proceed
with specific projects for northern
development:

a) sufficient public discussion and debate about
proposed industrial projects,

based on independent studies of energy needs and social costs of the proposed developments;

- b) **achievement of a just land settlement** with the Native Peoples, including hunting, fishing, and trapping rights and fair royalties in return for the extraction of valuable resources from their land claims;
- c) **effective participation by the Native Peoples** in shaping the kind of regional development, beginning with effective control over their own future economic development;
- d) **adequate measures to protect the terrain, vegetation, wildlife and waters of northern areas,** based on complete and independent studies of the regional environment to be affected by proposed developments;
- e) **adequate controls to regulate the extraction of energy resources from the North,** to prevent the rapid depletion of oil, gas, and other resources which are non-renewable.

30. It remains to be seen whether Canada's "last frontier" will be developed according to the principles of justice and stewardship. The next two years will be a crucial testing period. In some cases, final and irreversible decisions have already been made. In other instances, there may still be a chance to alter the course of development. The Mackenzie Valley pipeline proposals presently being reviewed by the Berger Commission and the National Energy Board could provide the real test.

31. As Christians, as citizens, we have a responsibility to insist that the future development of the Canadian North

be based on
social justice and responsible stewardship.
As responsible citizens
are we prepared to:

- a) **study** one or more
of the industrial projects
in the northern parts of our provinces
or the Territories?
- b) **actively support**
Native Peoples' organizations and
public interest groups
currently striving
to change the policies of northern development?
- c) **engage policy makers**,
both federal and provincial,
and local Members of Parliament
in a public dialogue about the ethical issues
of northern development?
- d) **raise ethical questions**
about corporations involved in
northern development,
especially those corporations
in which Church institutions may have shares?
- e) **seek a just settlement**
regarding specific church landholdings
that are subject to native claims?
- f) **design** education programs
to examine personal life styles
and change the patterns of wasteful energy consumption
in our homes, churches, schools,
and places of work?
- g) **collaborate** with the other
Canadian churches, in every way possible,
in a common Christian effort
to achieve the above objectives?

32. In the final analysis
what is required is nothing less
than fundamental social change.
Until we
as a society
begin to change
our own life styles
based on wealth and comfort,
until we

begin to change the
profit-oriented priorities
of our industrial system,
we will continue
placing exorbitant demands
on the limited supplies of energy
in the North
and end up exploiting the people
of the North
in order to get those resources.

Conclusion

33. We wish to emphasize that
this message is only one step
in the continuing struggle
for justice and stewardship
in the Canadian North.

For our part,
we want to join with

- other members of the Catholic community,
- fellow Christians,
- members of the other faiths,
- and fellow citizens.

Together,
we may be able to act
in solidarity with
the Native Peoples of the North,
in a common search for more creative ways
of developing the "last frontier"
of this country.

34. Ultimately, the challenge before us
is a test of our faithfulness
in the living God.

For we believe
that the struggle for justice
and responsible stewardship
in the North today,
like that in distant
Third World countries,
is the voice of the Lord
among us.

We are called
to involve ourselves in these struggles,
to become active
at the very centre of human history
where the great voice of God
cries out
for the fullness of life.

NOTES

1. These reflections and judgments are based on a variety of consultations and conversations with people concerned with the future development of the Canadian North. See in particular a recent work by Louis-Edmond Hamelin, "Nordicité canadienne", (Montreal, H.M.H., 1975).
2. For example, cf. Eric Gourdeau, "The People of the Canadian North", and "Impressions of the Land", in *Arctic Alternatives* (Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, 1973).
3. The particular phrase is the title of a documentary produced by the National Film Board and a direct quote from the Cree Indian people of the Mistassini area in Northern Quebec. Variations of this theme are frequently expressed by Native Peoples, throughout the North.
4. Cf. Lloyd Barber, "The basis for Native Claims in Canada", Address to the Rotary Club, Yellowknife, NWT, October, 1974. Mr. Barber is the Indian Claims Commissioner for Canada. See also, René Fumoleau, o.m.i., "As Long As This Land Shall Last", (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1975).
5. Cf. Wade Rowland, *Fueling Canada's Future*, (Toronto, MacMillan of Canada, 1974), chapter two.
6. This concern was expressed in a July 11, 1973, letter to Premier Bourassa by Cardinal Maurice Roy of Quebec, writing as President of the Assemblée des évêques du Québec.
7. Cf. two comparative articles: *Whose Development? — The Impact of Development on the Native Peoples of Canada and Brazil; What Price Development? Foreign Investment and Resources Extraction in British Columbia and Jamaica*. Both articles are available from the Interchurch Committee for World Development Education, 600 Jarvis St., Toronto.
8. For example, cf. *l'Aménagement de la Baie James: progrès ou désastre?* par le comité pour la défense de la Baie James, Montréal; *The Churchill Diversion — Time Runs out for the Native People of the North*, available from the Canadian Association in support of Native Peoples, Ottawa; *Northwest Development: What and For Whom*, available from the Northwest B.C. Conference Committee, Terrace, B.C.
9. This has been the case with most of the major energy projects in the North to date. A land settlement is currently being negotiated with the Native People of the James Bay region, but these negotiations are taking place *after* the basic industrial plans have been established.
10. For example, the natives of Nelson House Reserve and South Indian Lake in Northern Manitoba face serious problems of flooding. Cf. "Northern Manitoba: The Project and the People", *Bulletin*, Canadian Association in Support of Native Peoples, December, 1974.
11. For example, during the construction of the Pointed Mountain Pipeline in the Territories, only 30 native people were employed for a maximum of three months, while 320 workers were brought in from the South. In 1970, after the federal government has invested 9 million dollars in Panarctic it has employed only 6 natives at \$1.75 an hour. Cf. Melvin Watkins, "Resources and Underdevelopment" in *(Canada) Ltd.* ed. by Robert M. Laxer (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1973).
12. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 69; *Populorum Progressio*, n. 22.
13. James Wash-shee, President, Indian Brotherhood of the Northern Territories, cited in the Brotherhood's initial submission to the Inquiry, 1975.

14. Cf. George Manuel, *The Fourth World*, (Toronto, Collier & MacMillan, 1974).
15. Third Synod of Bishops, 1971. *Justice in the World*, p. 14.
16. Cf. *An Energy Policy for Canada: Phase I*, (Ottawa: Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, 1973).
17. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 11.
18. Cf. for example, Wade Rowland, *Fueling Canada's Future*, Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, *Gas From the Mackenzie Delta: Now or Later*; James Laxer, *Canada's Energy Crisis: Background Statement on the Arctic*, Pollution Probe at the University of Toronto, March 28, 1972, revised April 12, 1972.
19. Cf. Rowland, *Fueling Canada's Future*, p. 44.
20. Based on statistics provided by Meadows et al. *The Limits to Growth*, a Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind, 1972.
21. Cf. Barbara Ward, and René Dubos, *Only One Earth* (England, Penguin Books, 1972), p. 44.
22. Cf. Ivan Illich, *Energy and Equity*, (New York, Harper-Row, 1974).
23. Cf. Mihajlo Mesarovic and Eduard Pestel, *Mankind at the Turning Point*, The Second Report to the Club of Rome.
24. *Simplicity and Sharing*, 1972 Labour Day Message, Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops. Cf. also Thomas S. Derr, *Ecologie et libération humaine* (Genève, éditions Labor et Fides, 1974).
25. *Development Demands Justice*, a joint statement by Canadian Church leaders, March 1973.
26. Canadian Oblate Conference, *The Religious Situation of the Canadian Native People*, November, 1971.
27. Third Synod of Bishops, 1971, *Justice in the World*, Introduction.
28. For detailed information, cf. *Resource Kit on Northern Development*, available at cost, from the Social Affairs Desk, Canadian Catholic Conference, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa K1N 7B1.

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